

## How many babies were born in PO Box 1663?

This question sent us asking Alan, the Lab Historian, for help. We received the following reply from him.

“I haven’t been able to find an exact number, but you might find this quote from Jon Hunner’s, *Inventing Los Alamos*, helpful:

‘Eighty babies were born the first year, and ten newborns arrived every month thereafter’ (p. 39).

That’s essentially a shade under 300 babies born in Box 1663 during the war.”



The 80 in the first year would mostly have been conceived off “the hill.” The Manhattan Project arrived in Los Alamos in March of 1943, although some wives came later. Many of the rest of the babies would have been the result of local efforts. Project Y, Los Alamos staff was young, with an average age in the mid to high twenties. General Groves suggested that something be done about the baby boom, but in the end, it was thought better to let nature take its course.

An unanticipated major role of the Project Y infirmary was serving as a maternity ward. The lab’s obstetrician was an appreciated and even celebrated member of the community.